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THREE ADDRESSES

BY

MRS. JAMES GOW

WITH INTRODUCTORY LETTER

BY THE

BISHOP OF LONDON

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The Holy Ghost

The Comforter The Spirit of Truth

The Ministry of the Holy Ghost

Recommended by the Bishop of London

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THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY GHOST

By Mrs JAMES GOW

WITH INTRODUCTORY LETTER BY

THE BISHOP OF LONDON

A Revised and Enlarged Edition of three Addresses given by Mrs James Gow to the Members of the Mothers' Union at Speaker's Court, Palace of Westminster, by invitation of Lady Horatia Erskine.

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LONDON: H. R. ALLENSON, LIMITED

The Ministry of the Holy Ghost

THREE ADDRESSES

BY

Mrs JAMES GOW

WITH INTRODUCTORY LETTER BY THE

Right Rev. THE LORD BISHOP OF LONDON

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FOREWORD BY THE BISHOP OF LONDON

FULHAM PALACE.

DEAR MRS GOW,

I have read your little book with much profit, and think that it should be of help to many.

Yours very truly,

A. F. LONDON

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NOTE TO SECOND EDITION 1911

THESE three Addresses, which are now published for the first time, were originally delivered during Advent 1908 to the members of the Mothers' Union at Speaker's Court, Palace of Westminster, by invitation of the Vice-President, Lady Horatia Erskine.

In the following year they were privately printed, by request, for the Mothers' Union, under the title of "The Holy Ghost, The Comforter, The Spirit of Truth."

They have since been revised, amplified, and partially re-written, in the hope that in their present form they may prove helpful to a wider circle of readers.

GERTRUDE S. GOW

19 DEAN'S YARD
WESTMINSTER ABBEY
Epiphany, 1911

NOTE TO THIRD EDITION 1923

THERE appears to be still a demand for this little book which has been for some time out of print, and a new edition is therefore being issued.

The war has shifted many perspectives, and in preparing the present edition for the press both omissions and additions have been made. It is hoped that some of the new material now included may be of use in facing the varied trends of thought of the present day.

GERTRUDE S. GOW

MADEIRA
Christmas, 1923

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THE MINISTRY OF THE HOLY GHOST

I

CHRIST'S TEACHING CONCERNING THE HOLY GHOST

IT is now generally admitted that the last century, more especially the early part of it, was one of great materialism. The Spiritual side of things appealed very little to the world at large, and was for the most part ignored.

In particular, the doctrine concerning the Holy Ghost was allowed to fall into abeyance; little was heard of it from the pulpit, and allusion to Him was conspicuously absent from the religious literature of the day. A statement by Dr Daniel Steele has been quoted in this connection—"In forty years not one article on this topic is found among the one thousand and two hundred in the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, or in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*." A writer in one of the religious magazines, as late as 1890, stated that an experience of eighteen years had shown him a signal absence of allusion to the Holy Ghost, not only in sermons but in religious literature generally, including Prayer Meeting topics, and Scripture Lesson books.

A year or two ago I was talking to one of our Bishops on this subject, and I asked him if I should be right in saying that the doctrine of the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, had been almost eliminated from Church teaching during the early part of the last century. He said: "You will be right in saying that it was *entirely* eliminated from Church teaching at that time." He added that he believed the Quakers had been raised up by God to keep this doctrine alive in the world.

But the general attitude of mind has indeed changed since then; a powerful reaction against materialism has set in, and we see on all sides that the longing for a more Spiritual atmosphere has begun.

Recent publishers' lists show that numerous books and pamphlets have been issued dealing with the subject of the Holy Ghost. From the pulpit we now hear constant allusions to Him, instruction is given concerning His Personality and His work; and everywhere His power is receiving fuller recognition.

At the present time we are hearing of revivals within the Church itself of the Spiritual gifts of Apostolic times. These gifts have never been withdrawn and are indeed in our midst to-day.

The answers already vouchsafed to prayer for the Holy Spirit should strengthen our faith, and should encourage every earnest Christian to continue steadfast in these prayers, and to be on the watch with true expectancy for further answers to them.

In a book on the Holy Ghost, by G. F. Holden, you will find in the opening chapter the following words:—

"It would be almost impossible to overstate the difference between the stress which in Holy Scripture is placed upon the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, and the part which that doctrine plays in the practical and devotional life of the modern Christian. Devotion to the Holy Spirit is the supreme want of present-day Christianity."

The Bishop of London, in his preface to this book, says—

"I feel myself that we shall never see a great Spiritual revival in the Church, or in any individual soul, until the 'Veni Creator' is said as a real prayer addressed to a real Person."

There is no doubt that everywhere Christians are now beginning to realise these facts, and that the doctrine of the Holy Ghost is rapidly regaining its rightful place amongst us; and as a result, we see a marked advance of true spirituality in the trend of thought around us.

But it is noticeable also that, whilst devout members of the Church and of other communities are having their attention strongly drawn to this important doctrine, many other people to whom religion is not a real power are turning their thoughts to some extent in the same direction;—I mean that the merely material is ceasing to satisfy, and that they too are yearning after something deeper. They are, therefore, turning to the supernatural and the super-normal, hoping to find satisfaction in one or other of the numerous "cults," philosophies and supernaturalisms —old and new—of which the world is full to-day.

It will be found upon close examination that nearly

all of these—when we get to their very *core*, deny or belittle the Incarnation and Atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. This belittling or unbelief usually does not appear upon the surface.

In reading books on such subjects we are, in the first place, often struck by the beauty of some of the thoughts—many of which are helpful, and in part, true ; we begin in consequence to hope we have found something which will uphold and strengthen our spiritual life. Then as we read on, we become gradually conscious that there is an absence of direct teaching on Scriptural lines ; our attention is arrested, and we see that underneath the veil of beauty and of truth—no evil is so subtle as a half truth—there lies the ignoring or the denial of the Incarnation and Atonement, together with an absence of a true recognition of sin. Such teaching is *not* consistent with that of our Lord and of the Apostles, and the " Jesus of Nazareth " of our Gospels has but little in common with the " The Christ " who figures largely in the pages of this class of literature.

We notice also that the Holy Ghost is often completely ignored or, if in a measure recognised, is treated not as a Person, but merely as a mental attribute.

We must remember, however, that we are well safeguarded, and that St John has given us an infallible test by which we may detect the subtle, specious, and antichristian doctrines that underlie the apparently beautiful teaching of these books which often contain many quotations from the Bible itself.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits

whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God. And this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world (1 John iv. 1-3).

It might be helpful here to pause for a moment before proceeding with our subject and test ourselves as to what our belief in the Holy Trinity really amounts to. We shall find this out by asking ourselves three questions—

"What would life be to me if there were no God?"

"What would life be to me without our Lord Jesus Christ?"

"What would life be to me without the Holy Ghost?"

With regard to the first and second of these questions, I think we should all be agreed. Our belief in our Heavenly Father and in our Lord Jesus Christ is too closely woven into our very beings for us to be able to picture to ourselves, even for a moment, what life without such belief would be.

But with regard to the third question, with some possibly the most spontaneous reply would be—"I have really never thought enough about the Holy Ghost to say what life would be without Him."

And some of us, I am sure, would admit that they habitually think of the Holy Spirit as "It" rather than as "Him,"—an influence rather than a Person.

If we properly understood the Apostles' Creed we

could not fail to realise the Personality of the Holy Ghost. Bishop Westcott has explained it convincingly [1]—

"We do not say 'I believe that there is a God,' that 'Jesus Christ came to earth,' that 'the Holy Ghost was sent to men.' In this sense, as St James says, 'the devils believe and tremble.' But we say 'I believe in God the Father,' 'I believe in Jesus Christ,' 'I believe in the Holy Ghost.' That is, I do not simply acknowledge the existence of these Divine Persons of the one Godhead, but I throw myself wholly upon their power and love. I have found and I trust Him who made, redeemed, sanctifies me. I have gained not a certain conclusion but an unfailing, an all-powerful Friend. 'I believe in Him.' He can help me and He will help me."

But some of us, I fear, still stand in a vague and uncertain attitude towards this very important matter, and I wish on that account to lay before you our Lord's own teaching with regard to the Holy Spirit.

I

The Holy Ghost has always been in the world. In the opening verses of the Book of Genesis we read that *darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, let there be light; and there was light.* Symbolically these words express a great truth: it is the entrance of the Divine Spirit into the human soul that brings light, just as His brooding on the face of

[1] *The Historic Faith*, Lect. II.

the waters preceded the bringing of light—the light which we see with our human eyes—into the world.

All through the Old Testament we read how "The Spirit of the Lord came upon" (R.V. margin, "clothed itself upon") one or another Patriarch or Prophet, and equipped him for some special service or mighty deed, by which the power of God was manifested to the people. It is interesting to notice also that the designation "Holy Ghost" or "Holy Spirit" is only used in the New Testament. Throughout the Old Testament He is called "The Spirit of God," "The Spirit of the Lord," and "The Spirit of His Holiness" —this last is the correct rendering of the Hebrew of the only three passages translated "Holy Spirit" in our versions of the Bible (Ps. li. 11; Isa. lxiii. 10, 11).

Thus we see that the Holy Ghost has always been in the world, but He came to mankind with a new power and a new function on the evening of the first Easter Day. Our Lord foretold and explained the new manifestation of the Divine Spirit when He said—

He dwelleth **with** *you, and shall be* **in** *you* (John xiv. 17).

In considering the prophetic pronouncements concerning the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, it is important to notice John the Baptist's testimony with regard to the coming of Christ. This is what he says about it, and his saying is recorded by all four Evangelists in almost the same words: *I indeed baptize you with water . . . but He that cometh after me . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire* (Matt. iii. 11; see also Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; and John i. 33).

We must notice further that in St John's Gospel the Baptist gives his authority for this statement concerning Christ and His mission. He says: *I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.*

In other words it was revealed to John the Baptist by God Himself that Christ's mission upon earth was to baptize with the Holy Ghost.

II

We must now turn to the Gospels, and collect and study those passages which contain Christ's own teaching with regard to the Holy Ghost, and having done so, we shall find that it is both clear and simple.

In Luke xi. 13, we are shown what God's attitude is respecting His bestowal of this great gift, and also what ours should be: *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.*

We are shown here that God does not *force* His good things upon us: He expects from us the exercise of our own free will. We must *desire* and *ask for* the gift we need from Him.

I once heard the Bishop of London give a very interesting thought on this point. He was speaking of the way in which God had created man "in His

own image." The Bishop said that when he was asked why God did not at once do away with all the misery, poverty, suffering and wrong in the world, he replied that it was because God created man " in His own image." God Himself has free will and He has endowed all His creatures with free will also. Therefore, if God were to abolish all the evil and misery that is caused by man's *misuse and abuse* of his own free will, He would be destroying His own image in humanity. Man would no longer be " in the image of God," because God would thus have destroyed His likeness in His creatures.

The same thought applies here: God is waiting in love to bestow upon us the gift of the Holy Ghost, but we have to exercise our God-given free will; we must desire the Divine Spirit and pray to God for Him.

We find in John iii. our Lord's teaching on the new birth by water and the Spirit, and although the doctrine of baptismal regeneration lies a little outside the scope of these addresses, we may note in passing that water symbolises purification and Spirit quickening, " the one implies a definite external rite, the other indicates an energetic internal operation. . . . Christian baptism, the outward act of faith, welcoming the promise of God, is incorporation into the body of Christ, and so the birth of the Spirit is potentially united with the birth of water. . . . No principle can produce results superior to itself. If a man is to enjoy a spiritual life, that by which he enters it—his birth—must be of a corresponding character. The flesh can only generate flesh. Spiritual life cannot come forth from it " (*Westcott*).

Christ continues His teaching on this subject in John vii. 37-39, by the striking allusion to the Holy Ghost in His oration on the great day of the Feast, when He said: *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, . . . out of him shall flow rivers of living water.* (*This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.*)

That is rather an obscure thought perhaps to some of us, but commentators have made it quite clear. I shall quote from Godet's Commentary on St John. His notes regarding the Holy Ghost throughout the Gospel are singularly clear and illuminating. He writes—

"It is neither the atoning death, nor the bodily disappearance of Jesus, but the positive glorification of Jesus by His restitution to His glory as Logos which is laid down by St John as the condition of Pentecost. If the work of the Spirit really consists in causing Christ Himself to live in the heart of the believer, it is evident that the Spirit could not come till after the personal consummation of Jesus. For it was not a non-perfected Christ that the Divine Spirit was to communicate to humanity, but the God-man arrived at His full stature. . . . It was, therefore, by all means necessary that Jesus should have been personally glorified in heaven, before He could be so, by the Spirit, in the hearts of believers, and by them, upon earth."

When Christ, as St Paul tells us, *ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men*

(Ephesians iv. 8). He returned to the Father, taking into the presence of God His human body, endued with resurrection life, to receive in that same body the glory which from eternity had been His in right of His Divine nature.

In His own Person He had sanctified humanity, and thus prepared it to become the habitation for the Divine Spirit, and He could now communicate to man a life at once human and Divine. The Holy Spirit could now descend and dwell in the consecrated temple thus prepared for Him—the heart of man.

III

Let us now pass on to John xiv. 15-17. *If ye love Me, keep My commandments; and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*

These words are so familiar to us that it is difficult to realise the deep truths contained in them. We know the passage, but perhaps have failed to grasp the whole force of its meaning—the words may have only touched the surface of our minds, without really having penetrated beneath it.

Let us carefully consider the last sentence—

He dwelleth **with** *you, and shall be* **in** *you.*

What a difference of relationship is here expressed by those two words "with" and "in"—the difference between a visitor and an inmate. How often

we fail to realise this mighty mystery—the personal indwelling of the Divine Spirit, and how crippled is our spiritual life in consequence.

The conclusion of Faber's poem, "The Starry Skies," contains some striking lines on this point—

> "But God is never so far off
> As even to be near,
> He is within, our Spirit is
> The home He holds most dear.
>
> "To think of Him as by our side
> Is almost as untrue
> As to remove His throne beyond
> Those skies of starry blue.
>
> "So all the while I thought myself
> Homeless, forlorn and weary—
> Missing my joy I walked the earth—
> Myself God's Sanctuary."

He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

We as Christians all recognise the Holy Ghost as *with* us. But are we not too much inclined to limit His power, and to regard Him merely as a beautiful Influence in our lives, instead of realising Him as the quiet Inhabiter of our hearts, whose unseen Presence should be real and controlling?

We know the Sacrament of Baptism was ordained for our regeneration, and the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, and Confirmation—when we have arrived at years of discretion—for the "confirming" of that gift. But have we all rightly understood this, and humbly and thankfully availed ourselves to the full of the supreme and mysterious blessing—God's gift to mankind, by virtue of His Son—the *indwelling* of His Holy Spirit?

This is indeed a momentous question and should not be put on one side, but should be quietly, candidly, and prayerfully faced by each one of us. We may be sure that thus illumination will come to us which will help and strengthen our whole lives.

We find Christ's further teaching on the subject of the Holy Ghost is continued through John xiv., xv., and xvi. in three groups of verses. When read consecutively they give us a vivid picture of the all-pervading power which, according to God's purpose, the Holy Ghost should exercise in our lives.

In the following transcript I have somewhat varied the order in which the passages occur in the Gospel:—

It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove (convict) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me: of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more: of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me; for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.[1]

When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto

[1] Please note that in these two sentences the personal pronouns He and Him occur no less than nine times, with full authority from the Greek text. We have here a strong indication that it was a real Person our Lord was sending to represent Himself and not a mere influence.

you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name (or "to represent Me"), He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

The first point we notice in these verses is Christ's statement that His departure is the necessary preliminary for the bestowal of the Spirit. The reason of this is not given here, but in John vii.—as we have already seen—the glorification of the ascended Christ by God the Father was essential before the descent of the Holy Ghost upon humanity.

It is self-evident also that Christ's Personal influence on earth was necessarily circumscribed whilst He was present in bodily form. It could only affect those with whom He came into individual contact: whilst, through the Holy Ghost, His Presence became all-pervading—or, as Bishop Westcott puts it, "The withdrawal of His limited bodily Presence necessarily paved the way for the recognition of a universal Presence."

The Bishop of Edinburgh, writing on the same subject, says: "In order that Christ might dwell in their hearts instead of in their vision, He departed, sending at the same time His Spirit to teach them:" [1] whilst Lücke states that "It was necessary that the veil of the flesh should fall that the liberated Spirit might flow forth in the Church."

There is another consideration also with which we are familiar from the human standpoint. No pupil

[1] *The Shrine and the Presence*, p. 89.

can be said to have thoroughly mastered a subject whilst his instructor is always present with him. The proof of knowledge is the ability of the pupil to stand alone—to do his work as accurately and well in the absence of his instructor as in his presence.

Dean Alford, commenting on the passage from another standpoint, draws attention to the fact that the words, *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you,* are " a convincing proof that the gift of the Spirit at, and since the day of Pentecost, is something totally distinct from anything before that time ; a new and loftier dispensation."

From the remaining verses we learn two things—Firstly, what the Holy Ghost *is*, and secondly, what He *does*.

1. What He is.

We are told that He is " The Comforter " and the " Spirit of Truth."

The word Paracletos, here translated " Comforter," means a great deal more than merely comforter ; it means advocate, helper, supporter, literally " He who is called as a support." The Latin word *advocatus* (from which we get the word advocate), is synonymous with the Greek word that is used here—someone who can be summoned in case of need.

He is to be our support in moments of weakness, our Counsellor in all the difficulties of life, and our Consoler in affliction.

Think for a moment what this would mean to the disciples whose hearts were heavy with the knowledge of the coming departure of their beloved Master.

Jesus was praying the Father to send to them a representative of Himself to replace Him : one who would always be within reach, and always ready to come to their assistance in any conflict with the world ; and who would, moreover, dwell with them for ever. And we must remember that all the Comforter was to the first disciples, He will be, and should be, to each one of us.

The second title by which our Lord designates the Holy Ghost is " The Spirit of Truth."

You will observe that after the passage John xv. 26 : *When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me ;* our Lord adds : *And ye also shall bear witness.*

Thus (and again I quote from Godet)—

" The Apostles were to be the witnesses of the *historic* Christ. Now the Spirit does not teach historic facts, but reveals their true meaning—hence the Apostolic testimony and the testimony of the Spirit form but a single act, in which each contributes a different element, the one the historic narrative, the other the internal evidence and the victorious power.

" The Spirit's teaching makes Divine truth enter the soul, gives it entire reality within us, and makes it *the truth* to us. This is, undoubtedly, the meaning of the expression The Spirit of Truth."

In fact, His illumination makes just the difference to us between understanding intellectually and discerning Spiritually.

This is the thought in St Paul's mind when he states that *no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but*

by the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. xii. 3). We must remember also that it is He, as Spirit of Truth, who "inspires what is good and true in conduct, and reveals what is good and true in doctrine." [1]

2. What He does.

The few verses which we have just read give us the ten offices of the Holy Ghost as taught by our Lord—

1. He shall teach.
2. He shall bring to remembrance.
3. He shall testify (or bear witness) of Me.
4. He will reprove (or convict) the world of sin, of righteousness, of judgment.
5. He will guide.
6. He shall hear.
7. He shall speak.
8. He will show you things to come.
9. He shall glorify Me.
10. He shall receive of Mine and show it unto you.

10*a*. He shall take of Mine and declare it unto you (R.V.).

Let us suppose for a moment that some high personage or eminent teacher occupied a position which involved the performance of these ten offices. Should

[1] In this respect His revelation is indeed sorely needed at the present time when the Church is face to face with a host of false doctrines disguised by every conceivable artifice to resemble Gospel truth. We should do well to recall our Lord's solemn warning on this subject (Matt. xxiv. 24) and seriously to study the latter part of that chapter, together with St Paul's warnings to the Thessalonians and to Timothy (2 Thess. iii.; and 2 Tim. iii.)

we not regard him as a man of transcendent abilities, and one, therefore, to whom we should instinctively turn in all emergencies ?

And yet the Person upon whom devolve these ten definite functions is, by many of us, being regarded merely as an *influence* which may or may not affect our lives.

IV

Let us now consider the real meaning of these ten functions—

1. He shall teach.

The first office of the Holy Ghost is to illuminate, to make clear our Lord's own teaching. All through the Gospels we meet with passages like these—

Then understood not the disciples.

At first they understood not these things.

They understood not, and were afraid to ask Him.

We realise that they *could not* understand the deep spiritual meaning beneath our Lord's words, without the " teaching " of the Spirit which came to them later, and which made all clear.

Contrast for a moment St Peter's impulsive and often blundering attempts to understand his Master, with the clear and compelling account of Christ's mission and ministry, with which he converted three thousand on the day of Pentecost.

And the Holy Ghost not only teaches, but accentuates the meaning of the Scriptures. Surely everyone of us has had some personal experience of this. We can all remember how, on occasion, some text or

passage in our daily Bible reading has suddenly become filled with new life and clearer meaning, and has come home to us with strange emphasis and power, and we have instinctively felt "This is God's message for me to-day."

2. He brings to remembrance.

This is indeed a power possessed by no human teacher. The Holy Ghost recalls to our minds, in the time of need, of trouble, of danger—or even in the time of great joy, just the thought, the word, or the fact, which meets the necessity of the moment, and brings strength, comfort, and peace. This function of "The Comforter" is one which we all recognise with deep thankfulness, for it transcends all human consolation and help, in the dark moments of our lives.

But we must be on our guard, for when these beautiful and consoling thoughts—perhaps sent us in Bible words—come to our minds on such occasions, we are apt to put away from us the suggestion of the supernatural, and say to ourselves: "*I* remembered it!" We rely so much upon our own intellectual powers that we are not always simple enough to take, as from God, that which He sends us.

3. He shall testify (or bear witness) of Me.

We must remember what a witness really is. He is not expected necessarily to disclose new facts, but to tell what he knows. All that is expected of a witness in a Court of Law is to keep to the point, and to tell exactly what he knows about the case.

This witness-bearing of the Holy Ghost, therefore, is not the disclosure to mankind of the historic Person of Jesus, nor the facts of His life and death, but the revelation of their true and spiritual meaning to each Christian individually, thereby bringing illumination and conviction to the heart.

St Paul emphasised this idea when he wrote: *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ* (Romans viii. 16-17).

4. He shall reprove (or convict) the World of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

The Greek word here translated "reprove" really means "to prove a person in the wrong," hence to convict. It should be noted that this conviction is in each case two-fold in effect—its acceptance will bring light and salvation to the believer, whilst by its rejection the unbeliever will be hardened in his sin and unbelief.

It is easy to understand what is meant by the Holy Ghost reproving the world of **sin.** The idea of sin in the Old Testament was confined mainly to such sins as are summed up in the Ten Commandments. But the Holy Spirit came to convict the world of a different sort of sin—the sin of unbelief in Christ. This unbelief is, as Bishop Walsham How points out, the root of all sin, just as faith is the source of all holiness—"and when we speak of unbelief we must not limit our thoughts to actual rejection of Christ or of His words, but must include the *practical* unbelief, which is far more common in these days, and

which is rather indifference and unconcern and the absence of any deep earnest conviction, than the positive denial of any revealed truth."

The conviction of **righteousness** is a two-fold one. The Spirit will first of all convince of Christ's own righteousness, and secondly, of the righteousness which He wrought for us—" His justifying righteousness—those merits for the sake of which we are accounted righteous before God by faith."

Another passage from Godet helps us here concerning the Spirit's conviction of the world of **righteousness** and of **judgment.**

He writes—

" If the world, and especially the Jewish world, was in error as to its notion of sin, it was not less so in its manner of understanding righteousness. Its ideal of righteousness was an unexceptional Pharisee, honoured by God and men. The Holy Spirit comes to show that this man, inasmuch as he believes not, may be a type of sin.

" On the other hand, He teaches the world what righteousness really is, by making it see its new and only true type, in the Person of One condemned as a malefactor by the righteousness of the age, but exalted by God to His right hand, and who, from the heaven into which He has vanished, acts with sovereign power.

" The Holy Spirit, in this respect, exercises in some sort the functions of a Court of Appeal. Good Friday had attributed sin to Jesus, and righteousness to His judges ; Pentecost reversed the sentence. It was to the condemned, righteousness belonged ; it was His judges who were malefactors. . . .

"This **judgment,** of which the Holy Spirit will give a demonstration to the world, is not that of the sinful world, but of its prince. For the world may yet be saved if it accepts the reproofs of the Spirit, while the prince of this world has now filled up the measure of his sin. The Holy Ghost will disclose to men the greatness of the invisible drama consummated on the Cross. But if this victory of the Spirit is to be won by the Apostles, the work of the Spirit must have first been accomplished *in them.* This is the reason that Jesus now passes from the agency of the Spirit upon the world *by* believers to His agency *in* believers."

Bishop Walsham How sums up the teaching from these three convictions in the following words:—

"We must not forget to note the advancing stages of these three convictions of the Holy Spirit.

"First, the sinner is convinced of sin, seeing its hatefulness and hopelessness.

"Secondly, the sinner made conscious of his sin is led to seek salvation from his sin through Christ's righteousness.

"Thirdly, being justified by faith in Christ, he learns to feel a blessed assurance that the cause of Christ must prevail, and that, as Satan's power has been already cast down, he—the prince of darkness—and all the evil of which he is the author, shall at last be utterly cast forth from the Kingdom of God."

He advises the thoughtful reader to trace out the same advancing stages—from the deep consciousness of sin, through deliverance in Christ, to faith in the

final triumph—as shown by St Paul in Romans vii. and viii.

5. He will guide you into all truth.

The word "guide" means literally "to show the road."

We remember how Christ has told us that He is the way and the truth. The Holy Spirit will lead every humble willing soul into that one and only way, and thus into the truth also. But we must not forget that though He guides He does not compel men to follow. This very word "guide" emphasises to us once more the importance of our God-given Free Will.

The Holy Spirit never coerces: if we follow Him we must do it willingly, He requires the obedient and intelligent co-operation both of will and mind. *For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind* (2 Tim. i. 7). And we must exercise this *sound mind*: we must expect that the Holy Spirit will indeed give us "a right judgment in all things," and thus go forward boldly, using every faculty we possess, and relying upon our "Guide" to lead us "into all truth."

6. He shall hear.
7. He shall speak.
8. He will show you things to come.

I think we shall understand these three functions of the Holy Ghost most clearly by taking them together. The Apostles are here taught to realise that God the Holy Ghost is present at the communi-

cations between God the Father and God the Son: that He shares in the revelation which the Father gives to His Son; and thus initiated into the Divine plan, He instructs all true believers according to their individual needs, imparting to them moment by moment, as they rely upon Him, necessary wisdom and strength.

We remember how Christ had on many occasions asserted that His own power came from the Father (*I can of my own self do nothing*, John v. 30; *My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me*, John vii. 16, and other similar passages); and now, what He had previously said of Himself, He asserts concerning the Holy Ghost—"The Son is of the Father, and so derives from Him His wisdom: the Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, and so derives from Them His Wisdom."

We gather also from the words "things to come" that the prediction of future events is to be regarded as one of the functions of prophecy—fore-telling as well as the more usual forth-telling (teaching and preaching). And we must not lose sight of the important fact—that as Jesus is not merely the Christ Who *is come*, but also the Christ *Who is coming*, these "things to come" are still centred in Him.

9. He shall glorify Me.

To glorify is to *magnify* the visible and to *manifest* the hidden worth of an object. The Son of Man was to be glorified when He in His human nature was admitted to the full participation of the Glory of God; and the definite work of the Spirit is the glorification

of Jesus in the heart of man individually and in the Church at large.

This means much more than the realisation by faith of the glory of our Ascended Lord and Saviour at the right hand of the Father. It means no less than the communication to us by the Spirit of the presence and power of Christ, which in virtue of His Divine Glory He can now manifest *within* us.

As our Lord's work on earth was to magnify and glorify the Father, so the work of the Spirit is to magnify and glorify the Son in the hearts of all true believers. He makes Jesus glorious to us, He makes Jesus to grow in our hearts and shine through us. "Christ, His words and work—this is the only text on which the Holy Spirit will comment in the souls of the disciples. Thus, He will, by one and the same act, cause the disciples to grow in truth, and Jesus to grow in them" (*Godet*).

"And this is the best test of all work and of all teaching which professes to be of the Spirit. If it glorifies Christ, we dare not lightly condemn it. If it does not glorify Christ we must at once suspect it of another origin. . . . If the Spirit's work be to glorify Christ, let us ever remember that this is done not only by the Spirit's witness to Christ in the teaching of God's word or of the Church, but in that witness which is borne by the holy lives of those in whom the Spirit has wrought a likeness to Christ. This work of the Spirit is clearly described by St Paul, who says: *We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*, 2 Cor. iii. 18" (*Walsham How*).

10. He shall take of mine and declare it unto you.

This statement is enlarged in the following verse—*All things that the Father hath are mine; therefore, said I, that He shall take of mine, and shall declare it unto you.*

The Father gives His all to the Son, and the Holy Ghost by permission of the Son participates in this "*All*" that He may reveal and communicate it to mankind.

We must notice the comprehensive significance of the words "Mine" and "All." They embrace and include the whole Nature, Work, and Teaching of our Lord, and should indeed be a pledge to us of the fact of the Spirit's leading into "*all* truth," and should bring us conviction as to the fulness and completeness of the Gospel of Christ as inspired by the Spirit, expressed and explained by the Apostles, and contained in the New Testament.

This subject of the ten functions of the Holy Ghost is one which we should do well to investigate carefully for ourselves. It has been impossible here to do more than just touch upon it. But I hope that the few points here indicated may prove suggestive, and may enable us profitably to pursue the subject.

V

Let us now pass on to the personal application of this teaching of our Lord respecting the Holy Ghost. Do we all realise, in our hidden life, that He dwells within us, the recognised and welcomed Guest? If

not, let us here and now put aside all misconceptions on the subject, together with all preconceived ideas; and with the simplicity of little children, try to realise the spiritual possibilities of our own lives.

How are we to obtain, in all its fulness, the gift of the Holy Ghost as promised by our Lord?

The conditions of the early Church as given in the New Testament seem still applicable. We must—

1. REPENT.

Repent, *and be baptized*[1] *every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call* (Acts ii. 38, 39).

2. OBEY.

The Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that **obey** *Him* (Acts v. 32).

If ye love Me, **keep My commandments** (i.e. *obey*), *and I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter . . .* (John xiv. 15, 16).

3. BELIEVE.

This spake He of the Spirit, which they that **believe** *on Him should receive* (John vii. 39).

[1] As we are already baptized, and—in the words of the Baptismal service—"regenerate . . . with Thy Holy Spirit," the condition of Baptism does not apply to us, except in this—that the keeping of our baptismal vows is a necessary part of the spiritual duty of every Christian.

In whom also after that ye **believed,** *ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise* (Eph. i. 13).

These are clear and simple directions which require no explanation, and surely we *do* believe, we *have* repented, and we *are* willing to obey.

Now let us turn to St John's account of what occurred on the evening of the first Easter Day. We remember how the disciples were gathered together in an upper room, and how they had locked the doors for fear of the Jews. Suddenly Jesus Himself stood in their midst and said: *Peace be to you, and He breathed on them and said,* **Receive** *ye the Holy Ghost.*

Here we have the account of the first gift of the Holy Ghost as an indwelling Power in the heart of man. Later we shall notice the marked change wrought by Him upon that little company assembled in the upper room and how their whole characters were changed and transformed.[1]

I want to call your special attention to our Lord's use here of the word *Receive,* and then to take you back in thought to the evening preceding the Crucifixion. Here we find Jesus, surrounded by His beloved ones, partaking of the Passover feast with them. At its conclusion He instituted and Himself inaugurated His supreme gift to the Church—the Holy Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

[1] It is interesting to compare St Luke's account of the Resurrection evening with that of St John. St Luke makes it perfectly clear that the little company to which our Lord appeared included—in addition to the Apostles—Cleopas and his companion (who had already seen Him on the way to Emmaus), and other disciples also (Luke xxiv.).

Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave it to them and said, **Take,** *eat, this is My Body.*

Let us consider for a moment; the disciples could not have partaken of the bread thus offered had they not put out their hands and actually *taken* it. There had to be a definite action on their part: Christ offered the bread, they held out their hands to *receive* it.

Now the word translated *take* in Mark xiv. 22 (*take, eat, this is My Body*) is identical with the word *receive* in John xx. 22 (*Receive ye the Holy Ghost*).

Surely there is food for reflection in this fact. Does not the choice of word imply that we ourselves have something to do in order to obtain this heavenly gift? Certainly some of the Commentators of the Bible have thought so, as the following quotations prove—

"The choice of word seems to mark the personal action of man in this reception. He is not wholly passive even in relation to the Divine gift" (*Westcott*).

"The Spirit identifies Himself too closely with our individual life to be merely a *bestowed* gift. If He is to dwell *in* us He must be desired and summoned *by* us" (*Godet*).

"'Receiving' not only implies God's bestowment but man's acceptance" (*Andrew Murray*).

This reception (or taking) of the Holy Ghost into the heart by a definite act of faith seems to have been clearly understood in the early Church, as we see from Gal. iii. 14. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law . . . that we might* **receive** *the promise of the Spirit* **through faith.**

But at the present time we seem rather to have lost

sight of this, and our spiritual life has suffered in consequence.

I am not speaking too strongly when I say that the personal acceptance of this truth—the reception of the Holy Ghost into our hearts by faith—is capable of effecting an absolute transformation in our lives. I have seen this actually happen so many times that I am perfectly convinced of the truth of what I am now saying.

If we *repent*, if we *believe*, if we are willing to *obey*—all we have to do is just with the utter simplicity of a child to open our hearts and *accept* the Spirit; we have not to say, "God will, some day perhaps, when I am a little better, give me this gift." We must "draw near with faith," realising that God is yearning to endow us *now* with His supreme Gift in all its fulness.

It is the power of the Holy Ghost alone which will enable us to become better day by day, which will enable us, in any way, to realise in our own daily life the wonderful standards of the Christian life which we find in the Gospels and Epistles.

The life of every Christian is fettered until the Holy Spirit is welcomed and recognised as the Indweller. And He is ours "for the asking and the taking."

I suppose we all understand this fact *intellectually*, and perhaps some of us have realised it spiritually; we know the Holy Ghost has helped us; and we recognise what His power may be in our lives. But if we are to be strong members of the Body of Christ let us come with courage as well as with humility, and *take* the blessing. Let us thank God on our knees,

not for what He *will* do at some future time, but for what He has even now already done.

Sometimes God allows us emotionally to realise His Personal Presence with us ; but God is also near, even when we feel our hearts like stone. We must cling by faith to the realities of our religion—and while thanking Him for emotions when they come, we must also be content to do without them. Remember that God is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and that His promise stands fast. Therefore, do not let us lose any of His blessings by lack of faith, by lack of belief in them, or by lack of energy to take them.

II

THE HOLY GHOST AS ESSENTIAL TO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

THE subject we are to consider now is the influence of the Holy Ghost upon our spiritual development.

I remember being somewhat painfully struck by a subject selected for some of the preliminary meetings held in preparation for the Pan-Anglican Congress in 1908. It was this—"Alleged loss of interest in orthodox religion amongst highly educated women."

It seems a terrible and significant thing that it should have been felt necessary to call attention to this fact, and to hold meetings about it. Still, if it exists, it is wise to recognise it, to face it and to try and find a remedy.

How is this "loss of interest" to be accounted for?

I presume that the majority of educated women, like ourselves, have been religious in youth; we have strong convictions, we have high ideals—especially when the power of the Holy Sacrament first comes into our lives, and we honestly try to live up to those ideals. Then perhaps, as we grow older, times of doubt and depression come upon us, and our enthusiasms wane; we grow lax—perhaps cold—and we lose definite interest in religion, because our

personal experience goes to prove that though it helps us to conquer *sometimes*, we are, as often as not, overcome by the worries and trials of life. Thus we lose faith in the power of religion to help us, even though we may not have the honesty to own this to ourselves. Then perhaps we settle down to a life composed of spiritual ups and downs, with little or no real hope that our spiritual life will ever be different on this side of the grave.

Too often, alas ! we feel that our religion has not been a success, and consequently we lose interest in it ; we throw the blame upon it, rather than upon ourselves, and perhaps we end by drifting away altogether.

I suppose we all have known at one time or another in our lives the hopeless feelings of depression caused by repeated failures in the spiritual life—the feeling that our best endeavours upwards always seem to end in a painful slipping backwards.

I remember being much impressed, and at the same time greatly discouraged, by a sermon I heard years ago about the difficulty of ever living up to the exalted ideals put before us so strongly in the Gospels and Epistles. It was a sermon by a devout and humble-minded man, who was himself evidently labouring under the weight of spiritual depression. He told us that if we were to do our very best—if we were to spend our whole lives struggling conscientiously after spiritual improvement—we might possibly end by becoming *a little better*.

The ideal of *possibly* becoming a little better is certainly not an inspiring one ! Is it Christ's teaching ? Do the Apostles teach it ?—Certainly not.

The New Testament teaching is that though the struggle between good and evil, and the fight against temptation, will always go on ; with the glorification of Christ came His gift to humanity—*the power to overcome.*

The whole tone of the Epistles is one of such absolute, exultant confidence in the power of God, through the Spirit, to overcome *all* — the world, the flesh, and the devil—that at times we are apt to feel almost depressed by their very buoyancy and hopefulness, realising, as we all must, the impossibility of attaining to any such attitude in our own strength alone. Take for example such a passage as this—

The very God of peace sanctify you wholly ; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it (1 Thess. v. 23, 24).

How wonderfully comprehensive is this short prayer, and what convincing confidence it expresses regarding God's power and will to make us holy and keep us holy.

I think those last words, *Who also will do it,* form one of the most inspiring sentences in the whole Bible.

We shall get the key to the secret of this victorious attitude by taking two verses and coupling them together. The first (our Lord's own words)—*Without Me ye can do nothing* (John xv. 5) ; and the second—*I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me* (Phil. iv. 13).

We see here that the strength of Christ in us can only have its full development in our own utter

weakness and self-surrender to Him, Who can and will possess us wholly, and make us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.

We find also that St John is, like St Paul, especially insistent on this power to overcome, which should be the heritage of every child of God ; and his first Epistle throws much valuable light on the subject, and should be carefully studied.

What then *is* this Power ?

Probably we shall all agree in saying it is the power of the Holy Ghost.

We all understand this intellectually, but have we all realised it spiritually, and do we all know it experimentally ?

And this is really a vital question. It is not merely necessary to grasp these truths with our minds : we must ponder over them, praying that the Holy Spirit may illuminate them to us—make them *the truth* to us so that in due time we may come to know them experimentally.

I

At the conclusion of the last address we considered our Lord's first gift to His disciples after His resurrection, on that first Easter Day—namely the gift of the Holy Ghost—and His last gift to them on the evening before the Crucifixion. We recalled the scene of the Last Supper and the institution of the Holy Eucharist, and noticed our Lord's use of the word *take* to His disciples, in giving them the bread. At their next meeting, on the evening of the Resurrec-

tion Day, our Lord appeared to them and He again came with a gift and used the same word *take* (receive).

St John pictures the scene to us with striking vividness—

Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus unto them again, Peace be unto you : as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said, **Receive ye the Holy Ghost** (John xx. 19-22).

Christ had risen, and He came with new power, to give to His beloved ones the earnest of Pentecost—the Holy Ghost as actually dwelling within them, rather than the Divine Spirit as an inspiring, external Influence, such as they had already experienced in the past.

Let us notice once more the importance of this reception (taking) of the Holy Ghost, with regard to ourselves. We must realise the necessity of duly recognising the Divine Indweller, and of opening our hearts unreservedly to Him, if we are to experience in our lives the light of His Presence and the Power of His might.

The word here used is the Greek verb *lambano*, which means, " I take what is given."

The ten virgins . . . **took** *their lamps, . . . they*

that were foolish **took** *their lamps, and* **took** *no oil with them, but the wise* **took** *oil in their vessels. . . .*

The Chief Priests **took** *the thirty pieces of silver. . . .*

Jesus when He had **taken** *five loaves He brake. . . .*

*Pilate said—***Take** *ye Him and crucify Him.*

These are only a few instances of the way in which this verb is used; it occurs no less than 300 times in the New Testament, and in each case it implies definite action. This definite active verb is continually used throughout the whole of the New Testament in connection with the gift of the Holy Ghost. I have collected some of these passages as examples. Our Lord Himself uses it—**Receive** *ye the Holy Ghost* (John xx. 22).

We find it in the following passages from the Acts of the Apostles—

Repent, and be baptized . . . and ye shall **receive** *the gift of the Holy Ghost* (ii. 38).

Peter and John . . . prayed for them, that they might **receive** *the Holy Ghost* (viii. 15).

Then laid they their hands on them, and they **received** *the Holy Ghost* (viii. 17).

Have ye **received** *the Holy Ghost since ye believed?* (xix. 2).

The same word is also used in the Epistles—

Ye have not **received** *the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have* **received** *the Spirit of adoption* (Rom. viii. 15).

We have **received,** *not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God* (1 Cor. ii. 12).

The anointing which ye have **received** *of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach*

you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him (1 John ii. 27).

In addition to the passages just quoted there are others where the verb *lambano* is used in connection with *asking*. Our Lord Himself laid great stress upon the relation between asking and receiving.

All things, whatever ye shall **ask** *in prayer, believing, ye shall* **receive** (Matt. xxi. 22).

Everyone that **asketh, receiveth** (Luke xi. 10).

Ask, *and ye shall* **receive,** *that your joy may be full* (John xvi. 24).

Whatsoever we **ask,** *we* **receive** *of Him, because we keep His commandments* (1 John iii. 22).

It appears obvious from these and other passages that this personal reception of the Holy Ghost was recognised as essential in the early Church. If this is so, surely here we might well pause and examine ourselves, asking St Paul's question: Have *we* received (taken) the Holy Ghost?

Many of us have been praying for the Holy Spirit all our lives, regarding Him as merely a beautiful *Influence*, which God might, in His own good time, vouchsafe us. And we *wait* instead of *taking* this gift, which God is all the time longing to give us.

If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him (Luke xi. 13).

"There is much energy wasted in asking for the fulness of the Spirit, which ought to be expended in simply receiving. . . . The Comforter is already

sent. Make room for Him in your heart by a thorough consecration to Christ. Simple trust is the only door through which God can come into His temple—your heart. . . . There is a time when prayer should give place to faith. . . . It is the duty of the Jew, not to pray for the Messiah to come, but to accept the Nazarene. It is the duty of the Christian, not to pray for the accomplished outpouring of the Spirit, but to accept the Pentecostal gift, and thus honour the Third Person of the Trinity, Who has already inaugurated His dispensation" (*Daniel Steel*).

We must remember, however, that there is all the difference in the world between our having the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost having full and complete possession of us.

"Let me no more my comfort draw
From my frail hold on Thee;
In this alone rejoice with awe
Thy mighty grasp of me."[1]

II

Let us now consider the effect of this gift of the Holy Ghost upon the first disciples, and how it affected their lives.

Bishop Westcott helps us to understand this: He writes—(referring to the passage, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*)—

"*A gift of the Holy Ghost*, even the power of the new life proceeding from the Person of the Risen

[1] John Campbell Shairp.

Christ. The Presence of this new life of humanity in the disciples, communicated to them by Christ, was the necessary condition for the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. The Spirit which the Lord imparted to them was *His* Spirit, or as it may be expressed, the Holy Spirit as dwelling in Him. By this He first quickened them, and then sent according to His promise the Paraclete . . . to supply all power for the exercise of their different functions. The relation of the Paschal to the Pentecostal gift is, therefore, the relation of quickening to endowing. The one answers to the power of the Resurrection, and the other to the power of the Ascension; the one to victory, and the other to sovereignty."

Just let us think for a moment what the conduct of the disciples had been previous to our Lord's resurrection. There were those who disputed as to who should be greatest. We remember that at the great crisis they all forsook Christ and fled. Think also how Peter denied Christ, and repented and wept bitterly; but he never went back and confessed! We read how the doors were locked for fear of the Jews, on the evening of the Resurrection, when our Lord appeared to the disciples. They all lacked courage.

Now let us note the contrast. I often wish that the Evangelists had told us more of what the disciples did between the Ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. We have only two groups of verses on the subject, but short though they are, they give us an important clue to the difference wrought on the characters of the disciples by the

indwelling power of the Holy Ghost. The passages are the five concluding verses of St Luke's Gospel, and the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

Behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen (St Luke).

And, being assembled together with them, Jesus commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel: which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.

Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the Mount called Olivet. . . . And when they were come in, they

went up into an upper room, . . . and continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren (Acts i.).

(Then follows the account of the election of Matthias to the Apostleship.)

From these passages we gather in the first place that there was now *unity* amongst the disciples ; there was *fearlessness* amongst them ; there was *patience* ; there was *faith* ; there was *joy*. And surely, from the human standpoint, it is indeed surprising that they should have remained in Jerusalem and be found "continually in the Temple." We should have thought that of all places this was the one which they would have avoided, judging by the fear they displayed when our Lord was taken. Yet, nevertheless, now they did not shirk being seen and recognised, and they went openly to the Temple.

We next notice that they continued with one accord in prayer. An alternative translation of this passage is—"these met regularly for united prayer," and an American writer (*S. D. Gordon*) commenting on this verse, says—"The greatest revival the world has ever seen had its origin in a ten days' prayer meeting."

Here we have presented to us a beautiful and suggestive picture of the devotion and unity of the Primitive Church, and we realise how the power of the Divine Spirit had permeated the inner lives of the disciples, and transformed them into devoted and courageous Christians, filled with love towards God and towards each other.

III

Let us now turn to the 2nd chapter of the Acts, and see what happened on the Day of Pentecost—

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance (ii. 1-4).

Let us note also two passages out of St Peter's great speech on that same day—

This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear (ii. 32, 33).

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call (ii. 38).

We thankfully recognise that God has called us all. Therefore, this "promise" is for us and our children, as surely as for those whom St Peter addressed: and the "gift of the Holy Ghost" is for all time and for all people.

But to return for a moment to the first Gift of the Holy Ghost. We have noticed the change which it

worked upon the lives and characters of the disciples ; let us now consider what its effect is, or should be upon ourselves.

It is not necessarily an emotional one at all. We are apt to cripple our spiritual life by gauging its strength by our own *feelings*. We must remember that the power of our religion consists in its facts, and not in our feelings about those facts, and though God may vouchsafe to us wonderful moments when His Presence seems very near to us, we must not allow ourselves to despond when we cannot *feel* this sense of nearness. And it is by the power of the indwelling Spirit that we shall conquer the cold hard feelings of depression, which are sometimes purely physical, and sometimes real temptations to try our faith.

We should be thankful for our moments of spiritual exaltation and emotion when God blesses us with them, but they are not essential to our spiritual growth, although they are a great help to it.

Then the Holy Spirit opens the Bible to us in a wonderful way. The Bible as history, biography, poetry, is open to everyone ; but the Bible as *God's Word to me*, can only be revealed in the light of His Holy Spirit.

When we read in the Old Testament " The Lord spake unto Moses " and others, we feel how beautiful it would be if God spoke to *us* individually in that definite way. But God's guidance for us—God's will for us—is all *here* (in the Bible) ; He no longer *habitually* reveals Himself to us by Personal revelation. I use the word " habitually " with intention, for there are Christians amongst us to-day, to whom God has

spoken as clearly and as unmistakably by His Spirit as ever He did in the days of old.

As we read and study our Bibles day by day, we must accustom our minds to rely more and more upon His Holy Spirit within us to put life and light into the words we read, that they may become to us the strength and illumination for the day, and for the moment.

We all know perfectly well what it is (do we not?) in our daily reading to see suddenly a new meaning spring up into a verse under our eyes; and we wonder that the passage had never occurred to us in that light before. It gives wonderful strength, and wonderful illumination perhaps, in some difficulty we may be in at that particular moment.

We must accustom ourselves to realise that this is the lighting up of God's own Word by His Holy Spirit for our special and individual help. Possibly that verse may never bear exactly the same meaning to us again; but we must not doubt that it was a personal revelation to us for that moment.

Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law (Ps. cxix. 18).

Again the Holy Spirit transforms our prayers. St Paul is emphatic on this point in the Epistle to the Romans. He tells us that we cannot know how to pray, but the Spirit prays through us, and then indeed our prayers are real, and they have power. So often we are in difficulties over our prayers—especially in praying for other people. When our friends are in trouble we feel so helpless; we cannot pray for them as we ought, we have not the com-

prehensive knowledge of *all* their need, nor what is behind the outward circumstances; neither do we know what in God's sight is best for them. But the Spirit of God knows, and we must quietly wait before God, and pray that His Spirit will so pervade us that our prayers may indeed be His.

And let us consider, do we habitually wait for and expect the answers to such prayers? I remember, years ago, reading an allegory[1] strangely suggestive on this point.

The narrator, conducted by his Guardian Angel through a magnificent cathedral, turns aside into a side chapel and sees laid on the altar there a number of beautiful jewels and other costly things. A grave-faced angel stood beside the altar apparently watching and waiting.

Upon being questioned as to what all these beautiful things were and to whom they belonged, he replied:

"I cannot tell to whom they belong, but they are all gifts asked for and forgotten—answers to prayers that have never been claimed."

Let us ask ourselves, "Are, perchance, some such gifts waiting for us?"

It has been said that our failure in religion is nothing but our failure in prayer (and surely this is, in many cases, only too true), and that our recovery will be our recovery of prayer.

It may be useful here to call attention to the difference which exists between private prayer and public worship. The one, as we have already seen, is secret and concerns God and ourselves alone. But prayer

[1] *A Cathedral in a Garden*, by Constance Nevill.

in Church is a different thing. There we unite, as members of the Body of Christ, to pray for the Church at large and for all humanity. Hence we sink the thought of individual need and of personal thanksgiving, remembering that we are part of a mighty host, amongst whom will be found responsive hearts to every single prayer and each word of praise. In this spirit we can join sincerely and devoutly in every part of the service—(whether specially applicable to ourselves at the moment or not)—from the deep penitence of the General Confession in the Communion Service, to the triumphant exaltation of the *Te Deum*, the *Gloria in Excelsis*, or the Ascension Day Collect.

IV

It is very remarkable how this gift of the Holy Ghost—this reception of the Holy Ghost—brings us into touch with other people spiritually.

Spiritual isolation has in the past been only too common, especially amongst educated women who are regular communicants. We are supposed, from a religious point of view, to be in a perfectly satisfactory condition, and the pastoral visits of our clergy, except in cases of illness, have in many cases been rare. We ourselves have doubtless been to blame to some extent for these conditions, because our ingrained, insular reserve makes intercommunication on spiritual lines difficult to us.

The war with its sorrows and bereavements has to a certain extent broken down these barriers of reserve and made such intercourse easier and more spontaneous.

Christian fellowship is one of the great needs of the day. But it must be clearly understood that the word *fellowship* is here used in its Biblical sense alone (which must not be confused with the meaning more recently attached to it by certain social and political movements of to-day), and it is interesting to note that the word *fellowship* in the Bible is never once used until after Pentecost.

The descent of the Spirit seems to have created this new relationship—"the natural gregariousness of mankind transformed by Grace into the Communion of Saints." The word in classical Greek simply means partnership—a purely business relationship. Now this fellowship which was brought about amongst the disciples at Pentecost is one of the most beautiful relationships that can be imagined.

I think you will all find that spiritual communion with one's friends creates in us the feeling of fellowship, just as it used to do in the early Church. *Friendship* is a beautiful relationship based upon love, upon mutual tastes, and interests; but *fellowship* cannot exist without a deep spiritual basis.

We see that fellowship was established amongst the early Christians by the power of the Holy Ghost; so in the same way the fellowship of to-day springs into life by His power alone. I cannot explain this, but you will find it true. A chance word with one or other of our friends may suddenly break down the habitual barrier of reserve, and we suddenly discover that they, too, are caring for the same spiritual things as ourselves.

Then opportunities come to us in a curious way

and our spiritual life becomes more and more a progression. We all know quite well what our inner life too often is; it is like going up a slippery hill, with many slidings back. But now we find a difference: we have a surer foothold.

We find that as we recognise the Presence of the Divine Guest within us and open our hearts unreservedly to Him, He comes to us with fresh blessings and endowments. "Then toil begins to be worthy of God because it begins to be alive with the life of God . . . work changes from being like the weary tramp of beaten soldiers into the march of conquerors." Experience shows that the more we ask the more we receive, *for God giveth not the Spirit by measure* (John iii. 34).

Let us turn our thoughts once more to the Day of Pentecost. Before the Ascension, Jesus foretold to His disciples that with the descent of the Holy Ghost they should *receive power* and that they should be *witnesses*. The fulfilment of this prophecy is seen throughout the whole of the Acts of the Apostles.

If there is any gift specially needed in the world to-day amongst Christians, it is Power. We want it for our own lives; we want it every day when we face the innumerable ills around us; we want it in our work; we want it with our children; and we want also the wisdom, the discretion and the tact which belong to power. We must all remember that power—one of the attributes of God Himself—should be ours by virtue of the Divine Spirit within us. *God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind* (2 Tim. i. 7). Let us there-

fore recognise and yield ourselves to His sway, and then claim His power and use it to the glory of God.

Christ said the disciples were to be witnesses ; and we noted on p. 29 that the Apostles were to be the witnesses of the historic Christ, to tell what they knew personally of His life and teaching, and that the part of the Holy Spirit was to apply that teaching to the *hearts* of the hearers, and to make it living truth to them.

A witness in a court of law has not to make a speech or address the jury ; he has simply to *tell what he knows* ; and that is just what I think we Christians are expected to be ready to do when necessary—to say "*I know*." This certainty on our part—this ability to say "*I know*" with *conviction*—helps to convince others far more than any arguments can do.

But we must ourselves be perfectly certain : our "witness" must have no uncertain sound. Bearing witness is not necessarily teaching or preaching, it is just telling quietly what God has made true to *us*.

Sometimes, it may be, we have to face the difficulty of trying to convince people who have no definite religious belief. Some of these are honest seekers after light whom we may, by the grace of God, be able to help. But not unfrequently we meet people who, whilst persuading themselves of the sincerity of their search after truth, are all the while really held back by a defect in their own will. They are *not* willing, through and through, to give up their sophistries, their own ideas, perhaps even their own doubts, and really open their hearts to receive the belief which they profess to long for.

In such cases it is of little use to try and bring conviction by mere words: we must show by our whole attitude what we ourselves *know* and can bear witness of the truth that is in us: and we must pray for them, and pray especially that they may be *willing to be made willing*. The complete surrender of the *will* to God is an all important and necessary step in the Christian life.

We should continually keep in mind the fact that we may, at any moment, be brought into contact with starving souls. The words—*Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, that are ready to die* (Rev. iii. 2), seem to me a very solemn warning. There are many earnest Christians who are positively starving because they think that no one else seems really to care about the things that appertain to God, who are, spiritually, "ready to die."

Personally, I do not believe we are meant to be for ever trying to speak to others of spiritual things. But I do believe we ought always to be ready to do so. We never know but that God may wish to use us as His chosen messenger to help another person at any moment.

It is a good plan, if we find ourselves having a quiet talk with anyone, just to pray for a moment, that if any message from God is to go through us to this person, that *He* will open the way and make the conversation come about quite simply. It is easy to make some leading remark about a service, or a sermon, or to touch on some such subject in the course of conversation, and, if this is taken up sympathetically, to continue.

But I am sure that forcing a religious conversation will do more harm than good. On the other hand we are often far too diffident about putting out this leading remark. We all suffer more or less from our national "insular reserve," and we find it exceedingly difficult to speak of the things which lie nearest to our hearts —especially of our own religious beliefs and experiences. But we should be willing to do this for Christ's sake, to help another when the Spirit leads us to do so, and we shall find that our own spiritual life is thereby strengthened and confirmed—*He that watereth shall be watered also himself* (Prov. xi. 25).

v

There is another thing which we probably find very difficult, and yet which is of real importance; and that is extempore prayer: we all feel it difficult to pray aloud in our own words. But we ought to be prepared to do this, or to be *able* to do it without any sort of self-consciousness.

If we are called upon to pray for, or with, a person, we may be pretty sure that that person is in dire need or extremity of some sort or another, and we ought to be able to lift up our hearts to God on behalf of such a one in all simplicity, without any thought of self at all.

The best way of conquering this very real difficulty is to accustom ourselves to the sound of our own voices in prayer, by saying our own private prayers aloud from time to time. In this way we get used to the sound of our own voice without its distracting our

attention from the subject of the prayer, and thus we shall be ready to pray aloud if we are called upon to do so, and to pray without self-consciousness and without hesitation as to choice of words. If we rely upon the Holy Spirit, He will help us in this, and we shall forget all but the Presence of God and the need we are bringing before Him.

Bishop Moule advocates audible prayer for quite another reason. "As regards *utterance*," he writes,[1] "I rarely allow myself to pray quite silently in secret. For myself I find the wanderings of the mind very much limited and controlled by even the faintest audible utterance of thought."

Having, then, *received* the Holy Ghost, have we learned to recognise His presence, and to rely upon him as the permanent Inmate—the Master of the House? Are we giving Him His proper place in the temple of our hearts?

Fénélon writes beautifully about this. He says—

"Accustom yourself gradually to let your mental prayer spread over all your daily external occupation. Speak, act, work quietly, as though you were praying, as indeed you ought to be. Do everything without excitement, simply in the spirit of grace. . . . You will find yourself infinitely more quiet. Your words will be fewer and more effectual, and while doing less, what you do will be more profitable. It is not a question of a hopeless mental activity, but a question of acquiring a quietude and peace in which you readily advise with your Beloved as to all you have to do."

[1] *All in Christ.*

Does not that put the whole matter in a very beautiful way ?

Then I would say, that having *relied* upon the guidance of the Spirit, we must not go back upon that guidance, as we are sometimes tempted to do. If we have, humbly and trustfully, done what we believe the Holy Spirit has led us to do, we must just rest in quiet confidence, and not allow ourselves to be tempted to doubt His guidance—even if what we have done *appears* to have turned out all wrong.

We must remember that our lives here on earth are like the wrong side of the carpet. We cannot see the pattern ; we can only see the knots and tangles in it. Remember, Jesus said : *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.* In that hereafter we shall see the *right* side—we shall see the pattern : we shall realise perhaps that what may have seemed to us the worst tangles of our life have by the power of the Divine Weaver become the most beautiful part of the design.

We must remember that God only gives us strength for each moment as it comes. We often waste the strength given for to-day by worrying over what we did yesterday, and wondering whether this or that course would have been better than the one we actually took. We must learn by our failures and our mistakes of course, but for this worrying kind of retrospection God gives no strength. Neither does He give strength for to-morrow.

How often do we face the various alternatives of to-morrow at the expense of much weary thought and absolute loss of vitality to-day ? Yet, when the

morrow comes the way opens out, and there is only *one* course that can be taken, and we have frittered away the strength given for yesterday in a perfectly unnecessary way.

Let us remember this, for it is a fact which will be a practical help in our daily life.

It was this truth which so marvellously helped and supported Madame Guyon during her four years of solitary confinement in the Bastille, under Louis XIV., and to which she ascribed the preservation of her sanity during that terrible period. She states that she was content to leave the past in oblivion, the future in obscurity, and to live "this moment" (each moment as it passed) with God.

What a lesson for us all is contained in these few words of faith and endurance!

I will conclude with a quaint little verse I found in an American book the other day. It is worded curiously, but it contains a beautiful thought—

> "I have a wonderful Guest
> Who speeds my feet, Who moves my hands,
> Who strengthens, comforts, guides, commands,
> Whose presence gives me rest.
> He dwells within my soul,
> He swept away the dross and gloom,
> And garnished fair the empty room,
> And now pervades the whole!"

III

THE HOLY GHOST THE SOURCE OF PERSONAL HOLINESS

TO-DAY we are to consider how we individually may hope to attain the higher ideals of the Christian life, and how we may experience, personally, the holiness enjoined on and expected from the children of God.

Let us take two verses from the Bible to serve as our key-note—

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Matt. v. 8).

Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (Heb. xii. 14).

Surely this vision by faith is a supreme need of to-day. Holiness would be a simple thing if only we could see: and yet holiness is laid down as the condition of seeing.

In an appreciation of Bishop Westcott, written by his former chaplain, the Bishop of Southampton (late Bishop of Tokio), we find these words—

"He was only strong because he saw, and *he took time to see.*"

Now if this was the secret by which a man of such profound piety as Bishop Westcott achieved strength how can *we* expect to succeed unless we adopt similar methods?

Do we, let us ask ourselves, take time to see?

To this question I do not suppose one of us would unreservedly answer "yes." For we all realise that however much time we *do* give to our prayers, and to the study of the Bible or to meditation, there is much in these directions which we leave undone.

We cannot help recognising also that whatever special hour we have set aside for spiritual quiet, the business and activities of life invariably seem to choose that particular moment for pressing in upon us. And if we are not actually interrupted, our minds are constantly flooded by thoughts of important duties to be performed, or letters to be written, which serve to distract our attention from holy things and render our quiet hour desultory.

We must not forget that one of the most subtle wiles of the devil, is to encroach upon the moments we have set aside for God, with the most plausible suggestions and interruptions. We need to pray specially to be protected at such times. We all recognise the fact that physical exercise is necessary for the well-being of the body and that time must be devoted to it. In the same way Spiritual exercise (prayer, Bible study, and meditation) is essential to our spiritual development. If we would grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we must *make* time for spiritual duties—other things must give way.

This is a point upon which Dr Daniel Steele has written strongly. He says—

"Let it be understood that the state of full trust in Christ cannot be maintained by hours devoted to

current literature, and minutes given to hasty glances at the Holy Scriptures. This is the path to spiritual emaciation, trodden by multitudes of weak believers, piteously crying, 'My leanness, my leanness.' There must be *time taken* to read, mark and inwardly digest spiritual truth, that it may pour its vital elements into the life-currents of our soul."

There is no doubt that this vision by faith—this "seeing the Lord"—is just what we all long for, and what we all need, to give strength and vitality to our religious convictions.

"Let us think of Christ," writes Father Congreve,[1] "manifesting Himself to each Christian, not merely as the Saviour we shall want in the shipwreck, in the last storm which ends life in this world, but manifesting Himself to us as all that each of us needs to-day, . . . as He has been to souls all down the history of nineteen centuries. It is a help to us in our meditations to realise that the Christ Who manifests Himself to us to-day by the power of the Holy Spirit, is the same Christ for us as He was of old to so many different persons, under various circumstances. . . . In meditating on the Gospel we get glimpses of what the Lord was to all these—of His character, power, and beauty. And all that He has ever been to any soul . . . all *that* He is (for He can never be less than Himself) to each of us, as far as we will receive Him."

In other words, *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.*

Possibly some of us have known what it is to have felt as though the veil were for a moment withdrawn,

[1] *The Spiritual Order*, pp. 86 and 89.

and that we have been vouchsafed a vision of the Lord. Sometimes in prayer, again, we have felt an awe-inspiring nearness to Him, the effects of which have remained with us for hours, and sometimes perhaps for days.

" And we must remember that every manifestation of Christ to the Christian heart *is for ever*. Christ does nothing for him, intending it to die and be forgotten. . . ." (*Congreve*).

But is it possible to maintain this attitude of nearness to the Lord here and now, in spite of our intensely material surroundings? Certainly Christ's words in John xvii., and elsewhere, seem to say so, and the Epistles emphasise His teaching.

The Church speaks also, with no uncertain sound, on this point, in the Ascension Day collect—

" Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that like as we do believe Thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee, and the Holy Ghost, One God, world without end. Amen."

If we could live daily and hourly in the atmosphere of this wonderful collect, holiness in our lives would become a vital power.

I

The Bible speaks clearly and unmistakably with regard to Holiness. God both desires and expects that His children shall be holy.

In a note in Dr Weymouth's translation of the Epistle to the Romans (chap. i. 7, "*Called to be Saints*") we read—

"Herein consists the supreme glory and the supreme difficulty of the Christian life, that we are not simply to speak of Christ to others, and, if need be, to do and dare great things for Him. By the power of His most Holy Spirit within us we are to *be saints*."

Godet, too, writes to the same effect. He says—

"The sanctification of each Christian is nothing else than the communication to him by Jesus of the human nature sanctified in His Person . . . Jesus created a holy humanity in His Person, and it is the office of the Spirit, Who has also the power, to reproduce in us this new humanity. In this respect, as in all others, the part of the Spirit is to take of that which is Christ's (that perfectly holy human life) to give it unto us."

Here, you see, we have two writers who both point out that it is the office of the Spirit, "*Who has also the power*," to reproduce in us the holy humanity of Christ.

We all know holiness is absolutely unattainable in our own strength, in our own might; but do we fully realise that the Spirit *has* that power—has power to *make us holy* and *keep us holy?* We have seen that the glorification of Christ brought about the bestowal of the Holy Ghost in His new function—that of dwelling *in* man, instead of only *with* him. And it is as we realise more and more the Spirit as the *Indweller* that we come to learn what holiness in our lives may mean.

St Peter is emphatic on the subject of holiness—

As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy (1 Peter i. 15).

Here are two other translations of the same passage which will help us to a fuller understanding of its meaning, the first from the *Twentieth Century New Testament*, and the second from Dr Weymouth's translation—

In your whole life show yourselves to be holy after the pattern of the Holy One from Whom you received your call.

In imitation of the Holy One who has called you, you also must be holy in all your habits of life, because it stands written, "You are to be holy because I am holy."

These are very impressive words, and cannot be lightly passed over. The question is, do these words represent to us the ideal standard of our own lives, a reality to which we may attain? Or is this standard of holiness merely an elusive vision of which we catch glimpses, but do not seriously contemplate as being within our own reach?

Our spiritual progress depends to some extent upon the height of our ideals. Low ideals do not produce saints. As we advance in Christian experience, the higher our ideals become; we see that our first ideal is by no means the culminating point, but that something more beautiful and more inspiring lies beyond it.

Christianity, it has been said, sets before men the impossible and then helps them to achieve it. It shows men how to make the ideal become the real. We are, in fact, never achieving our best until we are striving for something beyond our strength.

Christian experience is like mountaineering. We all know what it is, in climbing a mountain, to see beyond us what we believe is the summit; and when we have reached it, we find it is not the summit at all, but in front of us lie undreamt-of further peaks, which lure us onward and upward.

The parallel does not altogether hold, because in earthly climbing we *do* get to the top at last, and have to come down again. But the things which appertain unto God have *no* summit, they are boundless and limitless in glory and extent.

Dr Moberly, in his *Atonement and Personality*, has a striking passage on ideals—

"Few beliefs are more fundamentally untrue than the belief, strangely prevalent, that an exalted ideal is an *unpractical* thing. It would be far nearer the truth to say that there is nothing on earth which can compare in practical effectiveness with a great ideal genuinely held. . . . The real meaning of the life of a Christian man, redeemed in Christ as a member of Christ's body, is something of singular loftiness. . . . Not in himself, but in Christ is the focus of his life. He is himself the inspired reflection of Another. He is a saint in whose face and in whose life the very lineaments of Christ are manifestly seen. This is a theory as logical indeed, and complete, and fascinating, as it is scriptural and true."

This statement is indeed a marvellous picture of what every Christian *might be*. It recalls the wonderful and awe-inspiring passage from one of the reputed sayings of Jesus—

Where one is, there too am I; where twain are, there too

will I be. As any of you see himself in the water or in a mirror, so let him see Me in himself.

Such words as these should be a real help, and should encourage us to believe in the practicability of trying to live up to the highest Bible standards of Christianity.

Personal holiness will affect our influence with others in a way that nothing else can do. It seems to create an atmosphere of its own in a remarkable way. Doubtless, we could all name friends or people we have known, who have this indefinable " something " about them. We have found it a help to come in contact with them, and an inspiration to know them. We feel instinctively that they live in close communion with the Master, and that His face has shone upon them, and that they have that light within them which is indeed the reflection of Another.

Some years ago, walking at twilight in a wonderful Alpine garden, my attention was called to a very ordinary-looking shrub. " Notice this plant," said my host, " it creates a curious atmosphere for itself." He then struck a match, and held it near to the plant, and a flash of blue flame was the result.

Surely there is here a little lesson for us all. Should not the atmosphere which surrounds every Christian be as a touch of living fire to all those who come in contact with it ?

Now our *unconscious* influence is usually far stronger than anything we do, or anything we say. Some time ago, I was talking to a friend of mine, a dissenter. A new Bishop had lately been appointed to the diocese in which she lived, and I asked her how he was getting on with the Nonconformists. She replied—

"He is a very good man; and I think we all get on with him exceedingly well; but of course he's not like the *old* Bishop."

I said, "Why?" "Well," she said, "it's like this, the old Bishop *was*; this one *does*!"

I caught her point at once: I knew both men, the one was a great personality—a saint, whose very presence was an inspiration;—the other, an earnest, hard-working Christian of the ordinary type.

This little reminiscence brings out just the point I wish specially to emphasise. If we are to be influences for good in the world, it is our personality which will tell what we ourselves are—just our own individual personal character. We must by no means neglect *works*, but remember, if we "*are*," we shall certainly "*do*" also. The "works" are bound to follow. I admit it is far easier to "do" than to "be," but we have just seen that the Holy Ghost has power to make us holy (to create in us the reflected likeness of Christ) and to keep us holy.

"The daily work of the Christian is the glory of Christ manifested within him and shining forth for all those whom he serves."

II

Now let us pause a moment to inquire "What is holiness?"

An early eighteenth-century writer (Cruden) states that—

"True holiness consists in a conformity to the nature and will of God, whereby a saint is distinguished

from the unrenewed world, and is not actuated by their principles and precepts, nor governed by their maxims and customs. There are different *degrees* of holiness in the saints, but sincerity is inseparable from the being of it. . . . The Holy Spirit, in renewing a man, infuses *an universal habit of holiness*, that is comprehensive of all the variety of graces to be exercised in the life of a Christian."

There are two thoughts here which I think we might well consider for a moment. In the first place it is pointed out that there are *degrees* of holiness. This is a very comforting and helpful thought, because when we read some of the ascriptions to the Almighty, we realise how *His* holiness transcends all that human thought can conceive: for instance, such ascriptions as those, in the service of the Holy Communion: "Thou only art Holy; Thou only art the Lord; Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father." Then again: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory; Glory be to Thee, O Lord most High." (This passage is taken from the wonderful 6th chapter of Isaiah, where we have the picture of God enthroned in glory.)

When we think of holiness such as this—the awe-inspiring holiness of God, we are indeed humbled to the dust, we feel how impossible it is for any human creature to dare even to tread, as it were, on the threshold of such holiness as this.

Yet we are commanded to be holy, and holy we must strive to be. Dr Plummer has a helpful thought on this point. He says: "Although the believer some-

times sins, yet not sin, but *opposition to sin* is the ruling principle of his life." Surely opposition to sin is a big step on the path of holiness.

Let us strive also to keep steadfast in the attitude so aptly described in the beautiful Eucharist hymn—

> " Look, Father, look on His anointed face,
> And only look on us *as found in Him ;* "

and in these wonderful words—

" There is One Holy even one Lord Jesus Christ, in whom are we to the glory of God the Father."

The second thought refers to the " habit of holiness." And here our first impression may well be one of surprise, " habit " seems perhaps to have very little to do with " holiness." But the more we think of it, the more true, and the more rational, this appears. We are " creatures of habit," we prove it by our efforts in the training of our children. The thing we consider the most essential of all from their earliest childhood is the formation of habits—good habits, regular habits. Upon consideration I think we shall realise that it *is* possible to train ourselves in " habits of holiness " in our daily life.

William Law has indicated lines on which this may be done. He urges the importance of acquiring habits in connection with our daily devotions. He advises one special room to be always used for this purpose, and when this is not possible, to set aside some corner of a room, and use it only for holy purposes : this, he holds, will help us to concentrate our thoughts on holy things when in that part of that room.

We ourselves might with advantage carry this idea a little further, and consecrate for ourselves parts of our homes by associating some beautiful thought, or inspired word, with the commonplace things which surround us. Let us, so to speak, hang holy thoughts in our houses, and then by force of will, habituate ourselves to *use* these thoughts, until they become part of ourselves, and we thus turn instinctively from the visible to the invisible.

This is not an easy thing to accomplish, and we are often forgetful; but as we accustom ourselves to this habit, it becomes a very real spiritual help, and thoughts thus used, quickly become prayers.

This sanctification of common things is certainly scriptural. We find all through the Bible that common things are used for a holy purpose—oil for anointing, water for baptism, the bread and the wine in the Holy Sacrament—four of the very commonest things in the world, sanctified to the highest and holiest purposes.

John Fletcher, of Madely, has given us wonderful thoughts about the eucharistic use of daily food. How much we might learn from that simple little story of the disciples on the way to Emmaus, how it was in the breaking of bread that the Lord made Himself known to them—just in the common act of the meal. Surely if we cultivate thoughts of this kind, amid the commonplace duties and occupations of our everyday life, we shall, unconsciously it may be, but none the less certainly, be cultivating the "habit of holiness."

And regarding this "cultivation" of sanctity in

our life and habits, let us consider how much responsibility devolves upon ourselves. The parable of the seed gives us the clue :—

So is the kingdom of God (which we are elsewhere told is within us), *as if a man should cast seed into the ground ; . . . and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself ; first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear* (St Mark iv. 26-29).

" Here," writes Admiral Mahan,[1] " you have fully developed the two factors—man's part and God's part. . . . This parable stands out to me, among the many of the Gospels, because it seems to me to set forth more compactly and more exclusively than any other the secret of Christian life. The hearing of God's word, prayer, the outward act of receiving the sacraments, spiritual effort of every character—this is man's part—the casting of the seed and the tending of it ; but the growth is not of him. The ripening of the life, the maturing of the Christian character, goes on by itself, not independent of man's *care*, but wholly independent of man's *power. Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts* (Zech. iv. 6)."

Thus the habits of our spiritual life depend absolutely upon union with God through the abiding presence within us of His Holy Spirit, whose illumination will guide us in our efforts and whose power will achieve the victory.

[1] *The Harvest Within, Thoughts on the Life of the Christian*, by Admiral Mahan, D.C.L., L.LD., U.S. Navy.

III

The thought of *holiness* is an excellent standard by which to gauge the ordinary events of our lives. We are constantly being brought face to face with the question as to whether certain things are right or wrong, we are perhaps inclined to make a mistake by dwelling too much upon "Right" and "Wrong." (I am not speaking now of actual sins, but of the innumerable problems which meet us, and about which some decision has to be made.)

If we search the Bible, we shall find that comparatively little is said there about right *versus* wrong: but what the Bible *is* full of—from cover to cover—is "*God's Will.*" Now it is obvious that God's will for us is progressive. Do not some of us forget this, and are we not inclined to get a little fettered by the very strength of our best motives?

I will try to explain my meaning more clearly. Perhaps at the time when we first begin, our attempts to lead a Christian life, in accordance with our highest ideals, we make for ourselves, after serious self-examination, a "rule of life," and we tie ourselves down to keep these rules at all cost.

This is, no doubt, an excellent plan, and we feel our spiritual life strengthened and expanded by the concentration and self-denial necessary to keep our rules.

But if we go on and on with this same rule of life, are we not doing for ourselves exactly what we are most careful *not* to do with our own children? Are we not tying ourselves down to the "Kindergarten"

stage of life indefinitely, instead of progressing, as we expect them to do, to the " school " and " college " stages ?

The rule of life we make for ourselves may be God's will for us at the time we make it ; but God is leading us *on*, and what is " God's will for me to-day," may not be " God's will for me to-morrow," may not be " God's will for me next week, or next month." Too often we rest on our oars : we are convinced we have God's blessing on our rules, and we feel great comfort in them, and so we rest there.

But God is always leading His children *on*, and when we have surrendered to Him our whole being, we must be prepared to lie loose and mobile (as it were) in His hands, to be moulded for His purposes moment by moment. We must not bind ourselves irrevocably to certain things because we are convinced they *were* His will for us *once*.

Let us next consider what is the *opposite* of holiness.

I am not talking now about the grosser sins. Donbtless, all of us here to-day have long ago tried to clear our lives from the fetters of such sins. But many of us feel that we do lack, and lack very greatly, the real holiness of which we have been speaking.

I am inclined to think that perhaps the word "worldliness," rather than "unholiness," would express most comprehensively to us the opposite of holiness so far as the difficulties and temptations of our own lives are concerned.

But it is not always easy to understand exactly in what " worldliness " really consists.

The best definition that I have been able to find is

by Dean Robbins of Albany, U.S.A. ; it seems to me that in a short paragraph he has got at the real heart of the thing.

In *An Essay toward Faith*, he says—

"The truth is that worldliness has very little to do with the outward trappings of life. It is as common among the poor as the rich, its home is as often a hut as a palace. Our Lord suggests the true scope of the danger in the parable of the sower. The thorns which checked the good seed are the *cares* as well as the *riches* of this life.

"Worldliness is a habit of mind which does not reveal itself exclusively in any one type of action. It can render any estate of life inimical to spiritual progress. It deals with the same facts as faith, but wrests them to less worthy ends. For every fact in the world has a two-fold aspect, the one material and temporal, the other spiritual and eternal. If the former appeals to us habitually and predominantly, we are worldly, if the latter, we are open to the access of faith.

"A man is worldly, or the reverse, according to the interpretation which he *instinctively* puts upon the facts of his environments. And that interpretation will ultimately leave its impress upon his every word and act.

"Heavenly mindedness will not mark life with any eccentric change of manner. It will indeed revolutionise *motives*, and thus subtly remould action, but an unworldly temper works from within, not from without, and is essentially independent of dress and entourage. It consists in loving the Best, in inter-

preting the humblest fact according to the highest category, in seeking the spiritual content of each circumstance of everyday life.

"God presses close in common things; the Vision of the Presence alone gives free course to Faith."

It seems to me that this really says almost all that need be said about worldliness. And if we examine ourselves on the lines here laid down, we shall find how we *instinctively* interpret the events of our lives, and thus prove to ourselves whether we are worldly minded or spiritually minded. The material presses very closely upon us from every side, and we must accustom ourselves quickly to discern the spiritual meaning which lies behind the material facts of life.

We are all familiar with Mrs Barrett Browning's striking words—

> "Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God,
> But only he who sees takes off his shoes."
>
> *Aurora Leigh.*

IV

In John xvii. 15, we learn what attitude our Lord Himself adopted towards the world, when praying for His disciples—

I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

The dangers and difficulties of life in the world were to be faced, not evaded. And in verse 17 we get an inspiring thought behind which lies a deep hidden meaning.

As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

"How could Jesus say that He sends them '*into* the world' when they were in the world already? Because He had raised them to a sphere above the life of the world, and it is from thence He sends them into the world, even as He had been Himself sent from heaven" (*Godet*).

Do you see the thought? Before Christ was sent into the world, He was in heavenly places with the Father; and before He, Christ, sent the disciples into the world, He withdrew them from it, and raised them into His own atmosphere of holiness: then from thence He sent them back into the world, even as He was sent from heaven by the Father—*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you* (John xx. 21).

I suppose that everyone of us who has taken up philanthropic or religious work of any sort, or has had to grapple seriously with the difficulties of life, has at times felt these words a great encouragement. We believe that Christ *has* sent us out into the world, has given us our appointed place in life, and has sent us this special work to do.

But have we realised that to be sent with power we must have retired into solitude with Christ, and be sent forth specially equipped by His Divine Spirit for whatever we have to do? We must learn to abide in this Holy Place with Christ, in order that His power

may abide with us when we go forth into the world again.

Let us return again for a moment to the difficult question as to what is God's will for us in the varied problems which face us in our journey through life. We all know what it is to be called upon to do something, while, at the bottom of our hearts, we are wondering whether it is really a right thing for us to do.

Naturally we feel we must think about it carefully, and pray about it. But sometimes we do *only* this, and nothing more. We forget that one of God's best gifts to us is the gift of sound judgment.

God hath not given us the Spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (2 Tim. i. 7). Prayer with careful consideration (the exercise of the "sound mind") will often show us the way out of difficulties of this sort: we require to look round us with intelligence.

Believing, as we do, that God has appointed to each one of us the exact position which we occupy in the world, we must believe also that He expects us to perform with propriety all the duties of that position, not excluding the many varied social duties which may devolve upon us.

If, then, God has chosen us to fill this position, it follows that He expects us to fulfil all its obligations wisely and well, whether it is required of us to give a dinner party or to black a grate. And we must not forget the injunction, *Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.* "We have never just to get through the drudgery of the day's work decently; the true object in doing it is never less than glory."

Let us suppose that our condition of life is represented by a circle, and that we, ourselves, stand in the centre, when we are fulfilling God's will, and are exactly where He means us to be. Standing thus, we must look round us with discrimination and judgment, doing our various duties quietly, unostentatiously, and as well as we can. If a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well. We shall, perhaps, have to consider more seriously whether certain things should be done at all: but whatever we *do* attempt, must be properly carried through.

Above all things remember we must keep our "eye single." All we do must be done simply as between God and ourselves. The moment any thought of competition with others comes in, or we begin to wonder whether our friends will admire what we are doing, or perhaps feel jealous that we are doing it so well—the moment this mental attitude comes upon us, we are pulled aside, out of the centre of our circle.

Living, as we do, in the midst of a life where everyone is striving to outshine everyone else, it is difficult to keep at arm's length the thought, "What will so and so think?" and thus, perhaps, the moment comes when we are dragged a little aside. Let us recall ourselves into the centre of the circle: *that* is God's place for us, and let us strive never to be moved from it by thoughts of competition with others, or of self-congratulation over our successes.

Our lives should be perfectly proportioned, and consequently, it matters very much *how* we accomplish all the little things which fall to us in the position we are in: and if we learn to take them simply as just

from God, and trust to Him to bring us safely through the snares which may surround the doing of them, by the power of the Holy Spirit within us, I think we shall not go far wrong.

"You have not to be a genius in order to do great good; you have only to receive Christ and carry Him hidden in your heart, a secret link with God, into all your relations with men." Thus writes Father Congreve, and gives us further encouragement by his statement that "If the Christian has perilously great opportunities and demands made upon him, he does not trouble himself about consequences, Christ in him can do what the hour demands." [1] As St Francis de Sales once said in exhortation, "Do not wish to be anything save what you are, but strive to be that perfectly."

Probably many of us have undertaken some kind of charitable or philanthropic work. We have begun it very humbly, and from the desire to serve God "not only with our lips, but in our lives." Our motives have been pure, and whilst we have felt unworthy to attempt this work, we have done so because we believed it was God's will that we should do it for His service.

As time goes on, and the work, whatever it may be, prospers (and work begun, continued and ended in God *will* prosper), there is always the danger that we may get a little independent over it, and begin to rely upon our own strength and our own power; and, perhaps, all unconsciously, we lose the purity of our motive and self-satisfaction creeps in. We must

[1] *The Spiritual Order*, pp. 191 and 103.

always watch and pray to be guarded from this—remembering our Lord's warning, *without Me ye can do nothing:* but remembering also St Paul's stirring exclamation, *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me!*

"The finished work of Christ is not the bustle of a great activity, but the peace of a surrendered life."

V

The call to personal holiness is not confined to the New Testament, but is met with throughout the Bible. The thought of holiness is a very prominent one in the Old Testament, and especially so in the history of the Children of Israel, upon whom it was emphatically enjoined—*Ye shall be holy; for I am holy* (Lev. xi. 44).

And ye shall be holy unto Me: for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine (Lev. xx. 26).

We recall the frequent injunctions to holiness which occur with regard to the Tabernacle, and we remember that it contained in addition to the outer court, "the Holy Place," and the "Holy of Holies." Again the words "Holiness to the Lord" were engraved upon the golden frontal of the High Priest's mitre, as a special reminder to all who beheld him. This call to holiness is continued and emphasised all through the Bible, from cover to cover, and personal holiness is, as we have seen, enjoined on and expected from every child of God.

From the earliest times God has demanded a dwelling-place amongst men, first an Altar, next a Tabernacle, then a Temple ; and with the glorification of Christ, and the presenting of His perfect humanity before God in His Person, God entered into closer, and more intimate, relationship with man, and consecrated the human spirit to be His habitation ; He no longer merely made His dwelling-place *amongst* men, but *within* them. Christ gave the indication of this new Sanctuary in His words to the woman of Samaria.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what : we know what we worship. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth (John iv. 21-23).

St Paul understood fully and explained clearly the new relation between God and man and the inward sanctuary now consecrated to His worship *in spirit and in truth.*

Ye are God's building (1 Cor. iii. 9).

Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you ? The Temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17).

What ? know ye not that your body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own ? For ye are bought with a price : therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20).

Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners,

but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; in Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord: in Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit (Eph. ii. 19-22).

William Law tells us in a striking passage what this Temple in our own hearts may come to be. He says:

"Again, this Pearl of eternity is the Church, or Temple of God *within thee*, the consecrated place of divine worship, where, alone, thou canst worship God 'in spirit and in truth.'

"Accustom thyself to the holy service of this inward temple. . . . When once thou art well grounded in this *inward worship*, thou wilt have learnt to live unto God above time and place. . . . For when God has all that He should have of thy heart . . . and thou art wholly given up to the obedience of the Light and Spirit of God within thee, to *will* only in His will, to *love* only His love, to be *wise* only in His wisdom; then it is that everything thou dost is as a song of praise, and the common business of thy life is a conforming to God's will on earth, as angels do in heaven" (*Spirit of Prayer*).

What a beautiful picture of complete union with Christ is here presented to us. Surely, when we realise that such a union is *possible*, we shall earnestly strive to realise it.

We must remember, too, the symbolism of Christ's purging of the Temple at Jerusalem: it is just this

which He, by the Holy Spirit, will do for each one of us—make His Temple (the Sanctuary of our hearts) holy, and keep it holy.

Our best *human* endeavours at self-improvement aim at *reformation*, and consist in abandoning things which we feel to be displeasing or antagonistic to God ; but often the desire for the things remains untouched, and may again prove stronger than our resolutions against them.

God works from within : *He transforms*, and transformation is a far mightier thing than reformation. The transforming power of His Spirit can change our whole nature, including even our desires themselves, and can, indeed, make us conformable to His Will.

St Paul realised this to the full, and often spoke of it in passages such as the following—

I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me (Gal. ii. 20).

An alternative translation (or paraphrase) of this passage brings out even more strongly the transformation thus accomplished in the Christian life—

The dominant centre of my personality is no longer to be found in my own will, but in the will of Christ. So the life that I am now living, here in the flesh, is inspired and controlled at every point by obedient trust in the eternal Son of God (*J. O. F. Murray*).

Here is, indeed, an ideal for us all : but how can it be attained ? It should claim our deepest consideration and must not be lightly attempted, for it means the offering to God our whole body, soul, and spirit,

to be dealt with according to His will, for the elimination of all that is contrary to Him, and for the purification and transformation of all that is good.

This is a mystery almost beyond our comprehension. But if we are only *willing*, God will do the rest.

" Do for me what I have not the courage to do for myself," are words which we find in a simple little prayer by Père Besson. Sometimes it may be courage we lack, and sometimes knowledge : but God understands our ignorance, and out timidity, and if we come to Him earnestly, and in all simplicity to pray for that holiness which He has commanded, we must not doubt but that He will meet us, that He will make His chosen Temple holy, that He, Himself, will condescend to dwell there, and that He will keep it holy.

In conclusion, I should like to leave with you this thought.

It has been beautifully and suggestively said that " All Christian life is a going out to meet the Bridegroom." If this was to us a practical belief, rather than merely a beautiful theory, it would revolutionise our lives : for surely the fact of thus " going forth " implies implicit belief in the advent of Him we long to meet.

Let us therefore daily habituate ourselves to this inspiring thought, realising all it may mean. We shall then be able, with the fervour of ardent expectation, to join in the Church's prayer—

" Grant us, we beseech Thee, that having this hope we may purify ourselves even as He is pure ; that

when He shall appear again with power and great glory we may be made like unto Him in His Eternal and glorious Kingdom, where with Thee, O Father, and Thee, O Holy Ghost, He liveth and reigneth ever one God, world without end. Amen."

Even so come, Lord Jesus.

" O Lord of Thy tender love, prepare Thou Thyself a place for Thyself in my heart. Empty my heart of every feeling, thought, emotion, desire, purpose, anxiety, hope, fear, which may interfere with Thy love. Open my whole heart to receive Thee; let nothing shut Thee out, nothing be shut to Thee. Thou alone canst fit my heart for Thyself; cleanse it wholly by Thy Spirit, that it may wholly love Thee; be wholly filled with Thee; wholly penetrated, enlightened, warmed, by Thee; that Thou mayest dwell in it forever, and it may love Thee with Thine own love in it everlastingly. Amen."

E. B. PUSEY.[1]

[1] *Great Souls at Prayer*, p. 267.

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